

Look for Classification Marking in Message Body

radio

From: COMSC NORFOLK VA [postmaster@oix.navy.smil.mil]
Sent: Thursday, January 25, 2018 6:20 PM
To: USNS RICHARD E BYRD; USNS MATTHEW PERRY; USNS ROBERT E PEARY; N43; N41; N3; CTF 73; USNS BRUNSWICK; COMNAVIFOR SUFFOLK VA; USNS MEDGAR EVERS; USNS CESAR CHAVEZ; radio; USNS RICHARD E BYRD; USNS MATTHEW PERRY; USS FRANK CABLE; USNS SIOUX; USS LEWIS B PULLER; USNS MILLINOCKET; COMPSRON TWO; USNS HENSON; USNS SUMNER; USNS ARCTIC; USNS APACHE; USNS YANO; USNS SPEARHEAD
Subject: DTG:251351Z JAN 18 COMSC NORFOLK VA BEARD POLICY ICO MSC CIVMARS// UNCLAS
Attachments: Dis_Adde.txt; ProHit.txt
Importance: Low

UNCLASSIFIED//

RAAUZYUW RUOISAA4052 0251819-UUUU--RUCORGP RUOIBBB.

ZNR UUUUU

R 251351Z JAN 18

FM COMSC NORFOLK VA

TO ALMSC

INFO ZEN/COMSC NORFOLK VA

BT

UNCLAS

ALMSC/001/18 //

MSGID/GENADMIN/COMSC NORFOLK VA/-/JAN//

SUBJ/BEARD POLICY ICO MSC CIVMARS//

GENTEXT/REMARKS/ 1. Due to the nature of MSC's mission, civil service mariners must be able to respond rapidly to shipboard emergencies and other exigencies, in times of peace and war. Our crews must maintain their personal grooming and wear apparel in a manner that permits proper donning and use of emergency, safety, and military-specific equipment with little or no advance warning. This is one of a number of areas where MSC was lax in enforcing training and other standards due to the relatively unchallenged nature of the global commons. That is no longer the case. In addition to the normal risk of fire aboard a ship in peacetime, that risk is heightened in contested environments in which peer and near-peer competitors may target our ships not just with conventional weapons, but also with chemical, biological, and radiological ones.

2. POLICY: All civil service mariners must be ready at all times to properly use a Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus, Emergency Escape Breathing Device, gas masks, lifesaving and survival equipment, and other similar required devices and garments. Any hair growth between the skin and face piece sealing surfaces, such as stubble beard growth, beard, or mustache or sideburns WHICH CROSS SEALING SURFACES is prohibited. Additionally, mariners cannot be attired in clothing or jewelry (including religious articles or devices) that interferes with proper donning and operation of this required equipment.

3. The Department of Labor Safety and Occupational Health standards, Navy occupational health standards, and MSC standards are not new in this area. For example, respirator protection regulations in 29 CFR 1910.1 specifically address facial hair. I bring up this issue now because in the last year we have increasing reports of ships finding sufficient numbers of crewmembers who cannot properly don protective gear, primarily due to interference of facial hair. On several occasions our Afloat Training Teams came close to failing ships on emergency drills because of challenges in assembling emergency parties who could obtain tight facial seals.

Look for Classification Marking in Message Body

In the last year we had to separate from Federal service a civil service mariner who refused to shave on religious grounds.

That mariner appealed to a third party who ruled in MSC's favor and upheld the separation.

4. I ask for your support and assistance in getting the word

out: Officers and crews who CANNOT obtain a tight seal on a gas mask or self-contained breathing apparatus due to facial hair, jewelry, headwear, or excessive hair bulk or length are putting their shipmates, themselves, and their careers at risk. Civil service mariners may be fit-tested at any time while aboard ship to ensure compliance with these requirements. Non-compliance could lead to transfer off of the ship and disciplinary action up to removal from Federal service.

5. Those under treatment by a physician for a medical skin condition that prevents shaving may submit a note from that physician to the ships Medical Service Officer or Medical Department Representative.

These cases will be reviewed by the MSC Force Surgeon who may approve a 90 -day waiver to determine if the treatment regimen will resolve the condition. If the treatment is unsuccessful, we anticipate that the mariner will be ineligible for continued afloat employment with MSC.

6. We have reached out to maritime union presidents, soliciting their ideas, support, and assistance in communicating the importance of this issue. The intent is to come back into compliance with occupational and Navy standards, improve safety and readiness, and minimize instances in which CIVMARs who elect not to comply will need to be transferred off the ship for administrative action.

7. Please commence enforcement within 30 days. You may repatriate those who refuse to shave or who have their requests for 90-day medical waivers disapproved.

8. Although I recognize that individuals with heavy beards may view this return to standards as impinging upon their sense of individuality; however, occupational safety and readiness to operate and succeed in a contested environment come first. I know that you and your officers will set an example for the rest of the crew to follow.

9. United We Sail! Mewbourne sends.//

BT

#4052

NNNN

<DmdsSecurity>UNCLASSIFIED//</DmdsSecurity>

CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED//